

From hot to cold.

How **Sensory Semiotics™** bridged the gap to reposition a heritage tea brand in a new drinking occasion.

Sensory Semiotics™ is the study of how sensory cues (e.g. taste, texture, aroma, sound, visual pack design) function as signs with cultural and emotional meaning. It helps decode how people interpret sensory experiences beyond physiology, revealing the symbolic and social associations that shape perception and preference. Our award-shortlisted approach has implications and applications spanning product formulation to brand positioning.

01 The Challenge

Yorkshire Tea, a beloved British brand known for its classic hot brews, has recently expanded into iced tea. They sought clear guidance and inspiration to present this new offering in a credible and distinctive way across the product experience.



02 Why Sensory Semiotics™?

Sensory experiences are shaped by culture, so considering product, brand, and packaging together leads to cohesive solutions. Semiotics-driven lateral thinking sparks innovative ideas that are both original and culturally relevant.

Using our cross-disciplinary expertise, the Sensory Semiotics™ approach was ideal for defining how Yorkshire Tea's brand assets should be used, which iced tea category codes to follow or break, and how to set clear sensory expectations on pack. This expert opinion was key to inform which stimulus was best to chat through with consumers in the Sensory Qual groups.

03 The Decode

We analysed 20 drinks linked to 'healthier' fruit-led hydration through a sensory and semiotic lens. This included decoding fruit visual styles, exploring how British heritage adds distinction, and drawing insights from bold, emerging categories like kombucha.

Outputs

- Category map
- Codes of meaning
- Semiotic mood boards
- Consumer validation of semiotics mood boards and tasting
- Stimulus to put in front of consumers



04 The Recode

Through Sensory Qual groups, we uncovered two key design gaps: consumers expected a different taste based on hot tea cues, and the brand's emotional tone didn't align with summer. Our design team developed effective solutions to achieve congruency in the product experience.

Outputs

- A holistic and intentional design brief

Fonts



LET'S HAVE A PROPER BREW

BRITS WON'T SHUT UP ABOUT IT. (SORRY).



Colours



Illustration



05 Who has used Sensory Semiotics™



DIAGEO



Contact us to see how we can help

huxly
An MMR Company

